

Torrance, California
August 11, 1944

MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR
MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF TORRANCE

The City Council of the City of Torrance convened in an Adjourned Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Torrance, California, on Friday evening, August 11, 1944 at 6:40 P.M.

Mayor Tolson called the meeting to order.

Clerk Bartlett called the roll, those answering present being Councilmen: Gilbert, Hitchcock and Tolson. Absent: Councilmen: Cucci and Powell.

Mayor Tolson announced that the regular order of business would be dispensed with, this being an Adjourned Regular Meeting.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was read from State, County and Municipal Workers of America, Local 360, approving the proposal of computing vacation pay on the basis of one twenty-fourth (1/24) of the employee's annual salary and commending the Council for originating the plan.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the recommendation of the Civil Service Board, approved by Local 360, that vacation pay be computed on the basis of the employees' average annual earnings be adopted and put into practice, and that the Civil Service Board be notified to this effect. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, signed by Mr. James L. Lynch, President, advising that the writer, accompanied by Mr. Sam Levy and Mr. H. B. Lewis had visited Pueblo on August 11, 1944 for the purpose of requesting Mr. Perry Isenstein to join in the petition of voters asking for an assessment district for the installation of sewers in that district.

It was suggested by the Chamber that that organization be permitted to obtain Mr. Isenstein's signature whenever his signature is necessary, due to the delicacy of the transaction. It was also stated that Mr. Isenstein had been found very cooperative.

It was further stated that the civic interest and spirit of cooperation manifested by residents of Pueblo is highly commendable. The Chamber of Commerce recommended that a superficial inspection of the general area of Pueblo be made with particular attention to the condition of streets and alleys, which are in a bad state of disrepair, as was pointed out by residents of the village, and very evident upon inspection, continued Mr. Lynch.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the recommendation of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce that an inspection be made of the condition of the streets and alleys in Pueblo be referred to the City Engineer for report and recommendation to the Council; that the matter of forming an assessment district for the installation of sewers in Pueblo be referred to the City Attorney for a report as to the necessary procedure for forming such an assessment district. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson requested Clerk Bartlett to read a communication from the United States Engineer Office relative to John R. Winters.

Clerk Bartlett read the communication, which requested that Mr. John R. Winters be given an indefinite leave of absence from his duties as Captain of the Fire Department of the City of Torrance for the purpose of serving as Fire Chief in the Panama Canal Zone, stating that trained personnel in that Zone is not readily procurable. The request was made on condition that his release at this time is practicable and provided it will not jeopardize the safety of the Torrance area.

It was stated that this request had been formerly made and a leave of absence denied Captain Winters. Councilman Gilbert stated that he had understood the City Council was willing to grant the request provided the Civil Service Board had no objections.

Mayor Tolson advised that the actual granting of the leave would be the duty of the City Council in this case, but that the decision as to whether or not Mr. Winters should be released would rest with the Fire Chief, who, Mayor Tolson added, had stated that Captain Winters and two other members of the Fire Department are the only three of the original department, and that his release at this time would seriously affect the Department.

Mayor Tolson added that it is extremely difficult to procure experienced and trained firemen for the Torrance Fire Department, which City is constantly faced with the danger of fire because of the war industries located therein.

Chief McMaster confirmed Mayor Tolson's statements.

Councilman Gilbert moved that, due to the fact there exists a shortage of trained firemen available in the Torrance area, and inasmuch as Captain John R. Winters is one of three remaining trained firemen of the original Torrance Fire Department, the request of the United States Engineer Office that Captain Winters be granted an indefinite leave of absence for the purpose of serving as Fire Chief in the Panama Canal Zone be denied, this action being based upon recommendation of Fire Chief McMaster, and that Mr. F. J. Currie of the United States Engineer Office, and Captain Winters be advised to this effect. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

City Engineer Glenn M. Jain arrived at 6:53 P.M.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that a wage rate of \$0.40 per hour be established for boys eighteen (18) years of age or under who may be employed by the City, a question having arisen regarding salary for boys hired for work with the City Street Department.

At this point, Mr. A. E. Treloar, President, State, County and Municipal Workers of America, Local 360, addressed the Council stating that \$0.40 per hour hardly seemed a fair rate of pay. He pointed out that various industries throughout the City are paying young boys eighteen years of age and under the prevailing rate of pay for men performing duties of the same nature as the boys are employed to do. Councilman Hitchcock commented that it hardly seemed fair to the other workers who have been with the departments for long periods of time, to pay young boys at the same rate of pay as the older, experienced men receive, and added that a young boy cannot be expected to perform the same work as an adult man performs.

Mr. Treloar stated that several groups of organized labor had already voiced an objection to the policy of paying boys at a rate lower than the rate for men performing similar work, claiming that a precedent would be established which could bring about a state of chaos in the industries, as there may be those industries who would take advantage of the situation and employ boys whenever possible instead of men. He stated that he was expressing the sentiment of Local 360 in this matter, a meeting having been held August 10, 1944 at which time it was directed that a letter be forwarded from the Local to the Council relative to this subject.

Mayor Tolson pointed out that he could not see how a bad precedent could be established by paying boys \$0.40 per hour, inasmuch as boys that age are eligible for neither Civil Service or Union membership, a fact which Mr. Treloar agreed was correct. Mayor Tolson agreed with Mr. Hitchcock in his statement that a young boy fourteen, fifteen or sixteen years of age is incapable of doing the same amount of work as is done by a man. He said he was more than pleased to see people receive just compensation for work performed, but that it did not seem fair, either to the taxpayers or to the older, experienced men, to pay young boys at the same rate of pay as experienced men receive.

Upon Councilman Gilbert's question directed to Mr. Treloar as to whether or not the establishment of a minimum wage scale by the Council for boys within certain age groups would conflict with any rules of Local 360, Mr. Treloar replied that he was bringing the Council the action of Local 360 as it had been evidenced at the recent meeting mentioned.

Councilman Gilbert also remarked that it is unfair to the other men to put a young boy to work at the same rate of pay as the regular men receive, adding that, to his knowledge, there are no available men for the jobs, but that if there are, he would favor giving them the jobs in preference to the young boys.

Councilman Hitchcock said that, in most cases, the boys are earning money just during the summer, and that it would be regrettable if they were denied the privilege of earning their spending money because of the fact that the City would be required to pay them regular pay, which the City could not justifiably do. He said \$0.40 per hour is not such a bad rate of pay for boys earning money during their summer vacations.

Councilman Gilbert suggested deferring action on this matter until the next Regular Meeting to allow time to contact other groups of organized labor and get their reaction.

Councilman Hitchcock stated that there are boys at this time working who will, before the next Regular Meeting, be entitled to pay checks and that some rate must be established for the purpose of computing their earnings.

Engineer Jain stated that the boys who work for the City are small of stature, and, although they are good workers, naturally cannot do the same amount of work as the men do.

Councilman Hitchcock suggested that the scale of \$0.40 per hour could be established at this time and a change made at a later date if a change is warranted. Councilman Gilbert agreed to this.

It was pointed out that one boy was paid at the regular rate of pay, as no rate had been established at the time it was necessary to issue his check. Provision was made in the motion for this contingency.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that a wage rate of \$0.40 per hour be established for boys eighteen years of age or under who may be employed by the City of Torrance, this rate to go into effect August 16, 1944. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert, Hitchcock and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: Cucci and Powell.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the employment of F. Merwin Jarratt, age 14, be authorized, on a temporary basis, as a laborer with the City of Torrance Street Department, effective July 17, 1944, at the rate of \$0.40 per hour. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert, Hitchcock and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: Cucci and Powell.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the employment of Richard D. Magee, age 15, be authorized, on a temporary basis, as a laborer with the City of Torrance Street Department, effective August 1, 1944 at the rate of \$0.40 per hour. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert, Hitchcock and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: Cucci and Powell.

Engineer Jain was instructed to notify the boys of the rate of pay they will receive.

Mayor Tolson moved that the employment of Roy Palmer, on a temporary basis, be authorized, as a Janitor, effective August 15, 1944, at a salary of \$155.00 per month. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert, Hitchcock and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: Cucci and Powell.

At 7:10 P.M., upon motion of Councilman Hitchcock, seconded by Councilman Gilbert, the meeting adjourned to August 16, 1944 at 7:45 P.M.

A. H. Barrett
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE

APPROVED:

W. H. Gibson
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE